

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing common value-added services for two-way point-to-point, multi-point-to-multi-point, point-to-multi-point, and/or multi-point-to-point real-time communications using various communication protocols, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a first of a plurality of communication protocol sources for a first value-added service using a first common value-added service protocol;

providing the requested first value-added service to the first communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol;

receiving a request from a second of said plurality of communication protocol sources for the first value-added service using said first common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested first value-added service to the second communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol.

2. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the requests received from the first and second communication protocol sources being identical in format at an application layer level, and the first and second communication protocol sources being different in format at a transport layer level.

3. The method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a request from the first communication protocol source for a second value-added service using a second common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested second value-added service to the first communication protocol source using said second common value-added service protocol.

4. The method as defined in claim 3, further comprising:
receiving a request from the second communication protocol source for the second value-added service using said second common value-added service protocol; and
providing the requested second value-added service to the second communication protocol source using said second common value-added service protocol.

5. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein both of said first communication protocol source and said second communication protocol source operate using the same one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

6. The method as defined in claim 5, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

7. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said first communication protocol source and said second communication protocol source operates using a different one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol, and an H.324 protocol.

8. The method as defined in claim 7, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

9. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

10. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said first common value-added service protocol is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

11. The method as defined in claim 10, wherein said second common value-added service protocol is different than said first common value-added service protocol and is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

12. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein said second common value-added service protocol is different than said first common value-added service protocol and is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

13. A method of providing common value-added services for two-way point-to-point, multi-point-to-multi-point, point-to-multi-point, and/or multi-point-to-point real-time communications using various communication protocols, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of first communication protocol sources for a first value-added service using a first of a plurality of common value-added service protocols;

providing the first value-added service to each of the plurality of first communication protocol sources using said first of said plurality of common value-added service protocols;

receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of second communication protocol sources for said first value-added service using said first of said plurality of common value-added service protocols; and

providing the first value-added service to each of the plurality of second communication protocol sources using said first of said plurality of value-added service protocols.

14. The method as defined in claim 13, wherein said first of said plurality of communication protocol sources operates using one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

15. The method as defined in claim 14, wherein said first of said plurality of communication protocol sources is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

16. The method as defined in claim 13, wherein said first of said plurality of communication protocol sources is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

17. The method as defined in claim 13, wherein each of said plurality of common value-added service protocols is different from each of the other plurality of common value-added service protocols and is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

18. A machine-readable medium having stored therein a computer program for providing common value-added services for two-way point-to-point, multi-point-to-multi-point, point-to-multi-point, and/or multi-point-to-point real-time communications using various communication protocols, said computer program, which when executed performs the steps comprising:

receiving a request from a first of a plurality of communication protocol sources for a first value-added service using a first common value-added service protocol;

providing the requested first value-added service to the first communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol;

receiving a request from a second of said plurality of communication protocol sources for the first value-added service using said first common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested first value-added service to the second communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol.

19. The computer program as defined in claim 18, which when executed further performs the steps comprising:

receiving a request from the first communication protocol source for a second value-added service using a second common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested second value-added service to the first communication protocol source using said second common value-added service protocol.

20. The computer program as defined in claim 19, which when executed further performs the steps comprising:

receiving a request from the second communication protocol source for the second value-added service using said second common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested second value-added service to the second communication protocol source using said second common value-added service protocol.

21. The computer program as defined in claim 18, wherein both of said first communication protocol source and said second communication protocol source operate using the same one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

22. The computer program as defined in claim 21, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

23. The computer program as defined in claim 18, wherein each of said first communication protocol source and said second communication protocol source operates using a different one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

24. The computer program as defined in claim 23, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

25. The computer program as defined in claim 18, wherein said first communication protocol source is one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

26. The computer program as defined in claim 18, wherein said first common value-added service protocol is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

27. The computer program as defined in claim 26, wherein said second common value-added service protocol is different than said first common value-added service protocol and is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

28. The computer program as defined in claim 18, wherein said second common value-added service protocol is different than said first common value-added service protocol and is one of a policy service protocol, a directory service protocol, a security service protocol, a billing/accounting service protocol, and a visitor/home location service protocol.

29. A server system for providing common value-added services for two-way point-to-point, multi-point-to-multi-point, point-to-multi-point, and/or multi-point-to-point real-time communications using various communication protocols, said server system comprising:

at least one value-added service server, said at least one value-added service server being adapted and configured to provide at least one common value added service in response to a request for the at least one common value added service; and

a computer program for providing common value-added services for two-way point-to-point, multi-point-to-multi-point, point-to-multi-point, and/or multi-point-to-point real-time communications using various communication protocols, said computer program, which when executed performs the steps including:

receiving a request from a first of a plurality of communication protocol sources for a first value-added service using a first common value-added service protocol;

providing the requested first value-added service to the first communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol;

receiving a request from a second of said plurality of communication protocol sources for the first value-added service using said first common value-added service protocol; and

providing the requested first value-added service to the second communication protocol source using said first common value-added service protocol.

30. The server system as defined in claim 29, wherein said plurality of first communication protocol sources and said plurality of second communication protocol sources operate using the same one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

31. The server system as defined in claim 30, wherein said plurality of first communication protocol sources includes at least one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

32. The server system as defined in claim 29, wherein said plurality of first communication protocol sources and said plurality of second communication protocol sources operate using a different one of an H.323 protocol, an H.310 protocol and an H.324 protocol.

33. The server system as defined in claim 32, wherein said plurality of first communication protocol sources includes at least one of a user terminal, a media gateway controller (MGC), a gatekeeper (GK), a multi-point control unit (MCU), and a gateway (GW).

34. The server system as defined in claim 29, wherein said plurality of common value added service servers includes at least two of a policy server, a directory server, a security server, a billing/accounting server and a visitor/home location server.